
SIERRA LEONE EBOLA RESPONSE – Meeting Minutes

LOCATION: WFP Office, Freetown

DATE: 23 September 2014

CHAIR: WFP Logistics

PARTICIPANTS: USAID OCHA UNICEF, WHO, Plan International, Save the Children, GOAL IRC, DFID, IMC, Oxfam National Pharmaceutical Procurement Unit (NPPU)

ACTION POINTS:

- Draft customs clearance procedures to be shared with participants
- WFP to assess storage space and handling capacity at Lungi airport
- Logistics Sector meeting moved to Monday's 2:30 at UNICEF

AGENDA:

1. Transport Update (Airport and Sea port, Overland transport capacity, UNHAS)
2. Customs clearance
3. Storage
4. Coordination
5. AOB

1. Transport Update

Airport:

- Insufficient cargo capacity and handling equipment (forklifts) was identified by participants at the Freetown airport.
- The Logistics Sector will assess Freetown airstrip and look into common storage options (such as erection of a Mobile Storage Unit (MSU) and in addressing the lack of forklifts available.
- It was suggested to consider using a central consolidation point for all organisations. WFP would manage storage, receive goods and deliver them to organisations in Freetown.
- While some organisations currently store their supplies either at their own warehouse or at the CMS in Freetown; some organisations directly direct them to treatment centres in the field.

UNHAS & Flights

- A new UNHAS flight schedule is available on <http://www.logcluster.org/ops/ebola14>.
- A 19-seat plane makes daily rotations, except Sunday, between Conakry, Freetown and Monrovia. On a weekly basis (Saturday) a helicopter serves Bo and Kenema in Sierra Leone from Monrovia, Liberia.

Sea-port:

- No major challenges were reported. It was advised that international shipping lines are calculating one week extra shipping time to Sierra Leone.
- Protective arrangements have been made at the port for the Port captain and boarding team to wear protective gears while boarding the vessels.

2. Customs clearance

- The Ministry of Finance has established a hotline (+232 25 260 472) to facilitate tracking of duty waiver letters. The Government will not provide a blanket waiver, however it is willing to fast-track the clearance procedure; what used to take 4-5 weeks is now possible clear in 1 week.

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- WFP Logistics has prepared a draft import and customs clearance procedure and will circulate it to participants for comments before discussion with relevant ministries for endorsement.

3. Storage

- The national central medical store (CMS) in Freetown requires extra storage capacity to be able to cope with the demands of the plans to expand treatment centre capacity. The plan is to move free health care products off-site and to use CMSs only for Ebola response supplies.
- NPPU identified two additional warehouses at Wellington of each 870 m2. The warehouses are to be approved by the Ministry of Health as follows: one being utilised for Ebola response, and one for free healthcare program. In addition an extra warehouse of 800 m2 was identified in Wellington to support the new treatment centre in Kerry Town (supported by DFID); this warehouse includes space for containers. Save the children will discuss details bilaterally with NPPU.
- It was advised that in Freetown, renting additional warehouse space should not be a challenge for partners as there is a high amount of idle capacity in the private sector. Organisations can contact WFP to obtain further details.
- The government suggested to have all supplies to be directed through the CMS, in order to identify more easily potential shortages of supplies.

4. Coordination

- As both the Pipeline Working Group and the Logistics Sector meetings address the same audience it was suggested to hold them both on Mondays at UNICEF's premises. The meetings will not be merged, and will be held separately. The Logistics Sector meeting will follow the Pipeline Working Group one.

5. AOB

- During the pipeline meeting on Sept 22, it was noted that agencies are experiencing constraints in availability of international air cargo transport to Sierra Leone. Consolidating cargo shipments and charters should be considered at point of origin, as transshipment and consolidation at an intermediate point is likely to create delays and customs issues.

Next Logistics Sector meeting will be held on Monday 29 Sept 2014, 2:30pm at UNICEF Office, Freetown

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